

Newton News

Incorporating The Newtonian - Newton Aycliffe's Free Community Newspaper, published on the first and third Friday of each month.
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Staircase Start-up, Heuvel, Turns Ten

A Newton Aycliffe digital agency, that's become the go-to partner for the North East's hospitality sector, has marked a major milestone. Launched a decade ago, under founder Adam Hill's staircase, Newton Aycliffe-based Heuvel has since grown into a 'six-figure monster' boasting one of the region's strongest hospitality portfolios.

Wynyard Hall, Ramside Estates and the Saltmoore are among those currently working with Heuvel, with several more big-name brands set to join in 2026.

"I'd worked for a few agencies and realised I could deliver far more value on my own," said Adam. "So, I launched Heuvel with one simple aim which was to build websites that didn't just look good, but genuinely worked and gave impact for the client."

Heuvel's break came in 2015 when the company secured its first hospitality contract, Middleton Lodge.

"We realised very quickly that the sector liked our eye for design," Adam added. "Hospitality became our niche from that moment on, and Middleton Lodge is still with us today."

Around 95% of Heuvel's client base is hospitality and the business has evolved far beyond its humble roots. What began as a one-man operation is now a six-strong team supported by a global talent pool including specialists in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Initially focused on high-performance websites, Heuvel has pivoted into a full design agency with a sharp focus on hospitality branding.

"We have worked with heritage venues and brand-new concepts, and I think the reason the sector trusts us is simple: we talk. Our approach has never been about moodboards. Every relationship starts with a real conversation and clients deal directly with me. If they need an update, they don't go through a switchboard, but instead they call my mobile. That level of access really matters."

Those long-standing relationships were evident at Heuvel's tenth birthday celebration at Middleton Lodge's Fig House, attended by clients and hospitality powerhouses like Rockliffe Hall, Grantley Hall, Swinton Estates and Raby Estates - with Michelin-starred chef Jake Jones designing the canapes.

"Hospitality is an industry built on results, and that's exactly what we create for our clients," said Adam.

For more information, visit <https://heuvel.co.uk>



Woodham Christmas Concert



Woodham Academy's annual Christmas concert took place at the end of last half-term, and saw a huge level of talent take to the stage. The sold-out audience was entertained by an evening of performances from solo singers, bands and instrumental ensembles, and even a sneak preview of this year's upcoming musical.

Almost 100 students, ranging from Years 7-11, were involved in total, taking on a variety of roles from on-stage performers, backstage crew or sound/lighting technicians. Year 7 participation in particular was the highest it

has been, with many of the younger students fully embracing life at Woodham by attending one or more of the extra-curricular groups who performed, and several also applying to sing solos or duets. The standard of performance was incredibly high, and it was a fantastic night.

Students will now be looking forward to the next project, Frozen Jr, which is taking place in March and for which rehearsals are already well under way. Tickets for the show will be available nearer the time, but it is safe to say that audiences are in for a treat!

Littering Nuisance

Dear residents of Newton Aycliffe, As a Town Councillor and a member of a dedicated litter-picking team made up of volunteers and councillors, I am saddened by the sheer amount of litter being dumped across our town.

Week after week, our team targets different areas of Newton Aycliffe - including wooded areas, hedgerows, nature walks, housing estates and the town centre. On a typical day, we can collect between 10 and 20 bags of rubbish. The items we find are sadly familiar: plastic drinks bottles, aluminium cans, discarded takeaway cartons, sweet wrappers, children's toys, clothing, nitrous oxide canisters, shopping trolleys and even stolen bicycles - much of it thrown from passing vehicles into hedgerows and green spaces.

As councillors, we are well aware of concerns around the availability of litter bins in some areas. However, the ongoing challenge is ensuring there is sufficient workforce capacity to empty them regularly. This makes personal responsibility even more important.

I therefore appeal to all residents - including dog walkers, cyclists, walking groups and shoppers - to please think twice before dropping litter. Every household has been provided with bins, and using them properly helps all of us to keep our town clean and tidy. Newton Aycliffe is a great place to live, and with a little care and consideration, we can all help make it a town we are proud of.

Kind regards,
Cllr John Woodward,
Horndale & Byerley Park.

£8,840 Raised for Charity

Darlington Hippodrome is delighted to announce that an incredible £8,840.00 was raised for its charity 'A Place For Everyone' through post-show bucket collections during the run of the 2025 pantomime, Goldilocks and the Three Bears which was produced by Crossroads Pantomimes.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of audiences, the collections throughout the run delivered a significant boost to the Hippodrome's charitable work, which focuses on improving access, inclusion and opportunities for people to engage with live performance and the arts. The annual pantomime remains one of the most popular highlights in the Hippodrome calendar, welcoming thousands of families and theatre-goers. This year's production of Goldilocks and the Three Bears not only entertained audiences with its humour, music and spectacle, but also demonstrated the community's continued commitment to supporting a venue that belongs to everyone.

'A Place For Everyone' helps ensure Darlington Hippodrome remains welcoming and accessible to all, supporting initiatives that remove barriers to participation and enable more people to experience the magic of live theatre.

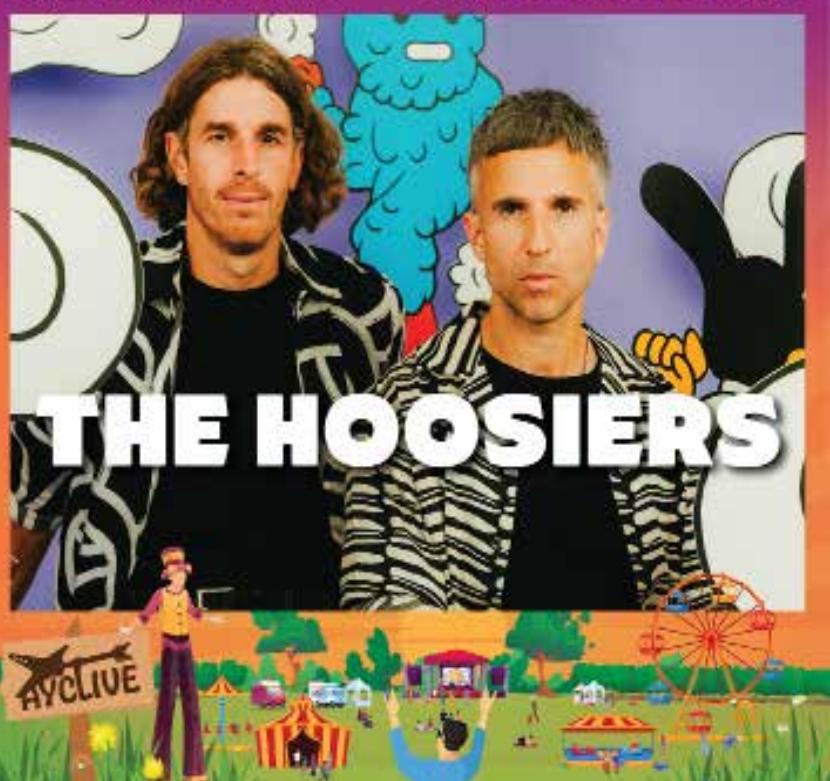
Darlington Hippodrome would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated, collected and supported the appeal during the pantomime run.

If you would like to support 'A Place For Everyone', donations can be made online or over the phone. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps make a lasting difference. Visit: www.darlingtonhippodrome.co.uk or call the friendly Box Office staff on 01325 405405.



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Steam Machine Big Mash-Up



Steam Machine Brewing Company in Newton Aycliffe is bringing back its flagship beer festival 'Big Mash-Up' this January, as it marks eleven years of independent brewing.

After a two-year break, 'Big Mash-Up: The Next Fermentation' will take over the brewery for a weekend of beer, music and street food, with evening festival sessions on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st January.

The festival has become a fixture in the North East beer calendar, regularly selling out and drawing visitors from across the region and beyond to experience Steam Machine's distinctive, small-batch approach to brewing. This year's event will feature more than 30 beers, including Steam Machine's own range of award-winning and seasonal brews, winter beers from across Europe, and a dedicated Fellowship of Beer bar pouring limited beers, designed and voted on by members of the brewery's subscription community.

Among the exclusive Fellowship beers will be a honey braggot aged in an Irish whiskey barrel, a beetroot saison aged in a Spanish Rioja barrel, and a recreation of Brunswick Mumme, brewed with wild botanicals based on 19th-century descriptions and matured in a brandy barrel.

The brewery's own beers will include favourites such as Debauchery Barrel-Aged Imperial Stout, Turkish Delight Stout, Lapsang Souchong Smoked Porter, alongside tank-poured pilsners, West Coast IPAs, fruit beers and more.

Festival evenings will also feature live music and Bavarian-style street food, turning the working brewery into a lively winter beer hall. Steam Machine Brewing Company is based at Unit 26, Northfield Way, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 6UF.

Tickets for the evening festival sessions are £10, which includes entry, a festival glass and beer tokens, and are available via steammachinebrew.com or from the brewery taproom.

Nick Smith, co-founder of Steam Machine, said: "Big Mash-Up has always been about showing how different and surprising beer can be. Eleven years in, we're still excited by that idea, and it feels good to be bringing the festival back."

HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

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Email: paul@newtonnews.co.uk

Crunching Snow and Ice

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club began its 2026 calendar with a fabulous walk along a section of the North Yorkshire Coast. All routes finished in Redcar and although there were walk options from as far away as Runswick Bay, only the most intrepid walkers walked from Staithes (15 miles) with most choosing to set off from the A174 at Boulby, Easington and south-east of Saltburn at 13, 10 and 8 miles respectively.

Bracing temperatures were endured early on following recent snowfall, but we were fortunate to see the snow-filled clouds disappearing out to sea making way for some outstanding sea views throughout the day. We crunched our way along the icy Cleveland Way, meandering through some steep uphill and downhill sections to Hummersea Point and eventually dropping down into Saltburn. We took refreshments in The Ship Inn and met up with several other AFWC members who had decided to do the same! Many later stopped by to sample the fish & chips from local outlets before soldiering on towards Marske and Redcar. We enjoyed a lovely beach walk to Marske, but we later discovered that others walked the beach all the way to Redcar!

Given the conditions underfoot, a large group had decided on the shortest walk and were treated to a lovely stretch of woodland dene which descended for two miles into Saltburn via Bennison Banks and Saltburn Gill. They really enjoyed this surprising contrast to the coastal walk which was to follow.

Everyone arrived safely in Redcar with enough time left to visit Rita's Pantry and The Plimsoll Line amongst others before heading home on the coach back to Darlington, Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland. The next walk will visit Northumberland with sections of Hadrian's Wall path between Housesteads and Corbridge.

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club is a very friendly walking club. Please visit our website: aycliffefellwalkingclub.com for further details, or if you are interested in joining us. Annual membership of £10 runs from January to December with each walk outing costing £15 to cover the cost of the coach. Feel free to join us on the next walk.

We look forward to your interest.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

By PCSO Steven Kipling


Happy New Year!

The local police sent a message in 2025 wishing a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, they highlighted Road Safety in that message and here is an update:

Durham Police arrested 109 people who thought their journey was more important than somebody else's life;

Thirty people were arrested for drink driving;

Sixty one were arrested for drug driving (cocaine and cannabis);

Fourteen were arrested for being unfit to drive through alcohol or drugs;

Four were arrested for failing to provide a breath test.

Thank you to those who were not selfish last Christmas and arranged a lift or a taxi instead.

You saved lives, kept your job, your licence and our roads safe. If you have concerns in your area around dangerous driving and speeding then please make your local police team aware.

Thank you,
Your Neighbourhood Policing Team.

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Working Together for County Durham

Increasing access to free school meals, providing warm and welcoming spaces, supporting rural communities and helping businesses to thrive are just some examples of partnership work in action in County Durham.

Durham County Council's Cabinet received an update on the issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP).

Made up of leaders from key public, private and voluntary sector organisations - including the local authority - the CDP aim is to improve the quality of life for people within the county. Its vision is for County Durham to be a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long and independent lives and communities are well connected.

Key projects and achievements over the last twelve months include:

More and better jobs

- An economic review found 8,000 more residents are now in employment than before the Inclusive Economic Strategy was adopted in 2022. The review also showed that the economy has largely recovered from Covid-19 and that in some parts of the economy, such as employment levels and productivity, pre-pandemic levels have been exceeded.
- The County Durham Economic Partnership brought key partners together for a conference to discuss the challenges faced by rural communities in relation to economic growth. As a result, funding was provided to Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services to support communities, including delivering rural skills training. Rural issues will also be a key focus of the Inclusive Economic Strategy.
- A new Enterprise Framework and Business Growth Programme are among initiatives introduced to support businesses. Important employability programmes, such as DurhamWorks, were also continued to help people into work and training.
- DurhamEnable - a programme that helps job seekers and employers to breakdown the barriers to work faced by people with disabilities, neurodiversities, and long-term health conditions - was ranked as excellent in its most recent Supported Employment Quality Framework assessment.

People live long and independent lives

- An additional 2,469 children received a free school meal after a scheme which automatically enrolled eligible families was piloted in County Durham. This resulted in a further 1,700 households saving £400 a year and unlocked an estimated £3.5 million in additional funding for schools.
- A Making Suicide Everybody's Business Conference, supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board, took place for professionals across the system. The conference brought people together to look at action already being taken in County Durham and to explore what more can be done to prevent suicide.
- The Environment and Climate Change Partnership Plan 2025 - 2028 was adopted.
- Communities and organisations that go the extra mile to care for the environment were celebrated at the annual County Durham Environment Awards.

Connected communities

- This year, the County Durham Partnership's annual event focused on how partners can work together to empower communities.
- The council's 14 Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) will be replaced by 12 Local Networks from April 2026. The aim is to increase opportunities for communities and individuals to get involved in improving their area.
- 75 Welcome Spaces were supported between October 2024 to January 2025, with £190,000 of funding allocated to community groups and organisations across the county. Durham County Council and Point North led the scheme, which helped to create a network of warm, safe and welcoming places for people to come together over the colder winter months.
- An Energy Efficiency Grant fund was provided to the council to support community buildings to reduce their carbon footprints and fuel costs. A range of measures have been taken across the country, including improving insulation; solar panel installation; lighting and heating improvements; window and door replacement; and the introduction of air source heat pumps.
- The Safe Durham Partnership was shortlisted for the Exemplary Partnership Award at the National Anti-Social Behaviour Awards in recognition of its work to establish a joint approach to tackling anti-social behaviour in County Durham and Darlington.

The CDP is made up of the CDP Board, CDP Forum, five thematic partnerships, safeguarding boards, 14 Area AAPs and a range of sub-groups and networks. This includes town and parish councils, faith groups, the Armed Forces and the voluntary and community sector. To find out more, visit: www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk

Board Game Group

Dear Sir,

We would be delighted to invite new members to join our friendly and relaxed board game group. We are a welcoming group who enjoy spending time together playing games such as Scrabble and Rummikub. No previous experience is needed.

We currently have a few places available and would love to welcome new faces. We meet every Monday afternoon from 2pm - 4pm at Woodham Community Centre. The sessions are informal and sociable with plenty of opportunity to chat, relax and have fun. Cost is £2.50 per session, which includes tea and biscuits. A great way to spend an afternoon, meet new people, and keep the mind active in a friendly environment. Why not come along and give it a try? Norma.

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Hazardous Judgement

Dear Sir,

I write in response to Councillor Gerald Lee's recent letter to the Newton News regarding the proposed Fornax hazardous waste incinerator on Heighington Lane. Councillor Lee has circulated an account of a Fornax site visit to residents and local councillors in which residents' concerns are described as 'baseless' and 'speculation'. This is both disappointing and misleading. The overwhelming majority of substantive information shared between residents during the Environmental Permit consultation was drawn from an independent peer review commissioned from a highly experienced and reputable air dispersion consultant. This professional, non biased assessment helped identify concerns and assess impact of harmful emissions. This review was shared with local MPs. Local MPs shared residents' concerns and objected to the proposed incinerator.

By contrast, the 'report' Councillor Lee shared, was authored by Councillor Aniko Towers following a site visit with Fornax. In that account, Councillor Towers states that "recent months have seen a spread of false concerns and misinformation," yet later writes: "I have little understanding of this industry or the intricacies," and, when discussing emissions data, "There were a lot of comparison numbers flying around, I found it hard to keep track of them."

It is difficult to understand how residents' concerns can be dismissed as 'false' when the councillor openly acknowledges a lack of understanding. If the information was not properly understood, the visit could not meaningfully challenge the developer's claims and amounts to little more than repeating assurances without evidence.

Councillor Lee has also stated that "it may well be a condition of the permit that emissions data is streamed directly to the Environment Agency. Residents were previously informed in writing by the Environment Agency that real time streaming, directly from site, was ruled out due to cyber security risks. Presenting this as a potential permit condition therefore appears speculative, which is ironic given the repeated criticism of residents for the same."

In addition, Councillor Lee has stated that the developer has "agreed to share emissions data with the council," yet no detail has been provided as to what data would be shared, how frequently, which council, or whether it would be independently verified. Again, vague assurances presented as safeguards.

Councillors are elected to represent their communities. The proposed incinerator is located near to nurseries, schools, homes and workplaces. Councillors repeating developer assurances and presenting them as fact falls well short of that responsibility.

Yours faithfully,
Concerned Resident.



Newton Aycliffe Juniors



Week Ending 18th January 2026

Under 7's Juniors played an incredibly good 21st All Stars Blues, but gave everything they could and were unfortunate not to score, hitting the woodwork on several occasions.

Under 8's Juniors were away to Middleton Rangers in a very well-matched competitive game. Aycliffe edged a great game with goals from Oscar, Noah, Jacob M and an own goal. MOTM was Jacob C for excellent performance in defence, showing great focus, strong tackling and composure throughout.

Under 9's Blues travelled to face Middleton Rangers Hurricanes, where they found it tough to get going in the midfield. Middleton opened the scoring before Leland struck back with an outstanding free kick. Middleton scored again in the second half on the counter-attack, it was a tough one to take in a close game of football. POTM was Jude who played well in defence and midfield. PPOTM was Nate for excellent work down the right.

Under 9's Juniors hosted Marton Whites, who themselves were struggling due to player illness. Aycliffe were frustrated at times, but it was a good run out for the team with numerous players getting on the scoresheet. The goal of the game came from Lewis who struck well from outside the box.

Under 10's Juniors welcomed Cleveland Juniors for the first game of the season, and it proved to be a great game, with Aycliffe playing great football. Goals come from Connor, Kian and Lincoln. Opposition MOTM went to Luke for a fantastic performance in goal and a clean sheet.

Under 11's travelled to Bedale Juniors for their first game since November. It was a good start with a goal from Noah A, but Bedale proved to be difficult opponents. Aycliffe showed outstanding work rate throughout. MOTM was Oliver T who chased every lost cause, did progressive runs into the final third and showed a very mature attitude.

Under 12's Reds faced Great Ayton, in a tight first half, it was Jace who set away Bryan to give Aycliffe the half time lead. In the second half, Yash and Marshall scored to give Aycliffe a 3-0 lead, before Alife rounded up the scoring with a terrific goal from the halfway line. Laitia was awarded MOTM.

Under 14's Blacks played away to Wear United Yellows, in their first outing of the new year. Wear United are challenging for the title and proved to be a difficult assignment, with Aycliffe going down 5-2. Kaylm grabbed both goals. PPOTM was Kaylm and MPOTM was Benjamin.

Under 14's Juniors returned to league action after the winter break against table-topping Kader FC. Aycliffe dominated a physical first half going in 2-0 at half time thanks to goals from Olly and Jonah. Kader tried to come back in the second half, but further goals from Jake and a brace from Lucas gave Aycliffe the 5-3 win. MOTM was Joel and OMOTM was Ashton.

Under 15's Juniors played for the first time since November at home to a strong Darlington FC Quakers. Aycliffe matched Darlington in the first half and led 2-1 at the break with goals from Lucas and Oscar J. Into the second, Aycliffe dominated and led 3-2 with a goal from Layton W, until the dying minutes of the game when the visitors drew level to make it a very entertaining 3-3 draw. MOTM was Jonah.

New Year, New Job

The annual Darlington jobs fair is set to return in February.

On Wednesday 11th February, dozens of exhibitors will come together at the indoor market as part of Darlington jobs fair with hundreds of opportunities on offer.

Those seeking employment, coming to the end of a qualification, considering a new job, or interested in exploring a new career, can call into the event any time between 10.00am and 2.00pm.

Darlington jobs fair provides the opportunity for attendees to find out more about a significant range of roles including those in retail, logistics, construction, the Civil Service, the care and health sector and many more, with businesses from both the private and public sector attending.

There will also be local education and training providers available who can advise and support attendees in identifying any learning opportunities appropriate for them.

In addition to this, advice and guidance will be available from a range of support organisations which can help people overcome barriers that could be making it harder for them to secure the career they want.

Cllr Chris McEwan, cabinet member for economy, said "It's great to see the jobs fair returning to Darlington for another year. This free to attend event grows in popularity every year and is the perfect opportunity for anyone seeking to change careers, start their career or to retrain. Part of our commitment as a council, to organising and delivering Darlington jobs fair every year, is to ensure we practically play our part in helping to find high quality, secure, well paid employment opportunities for local people which will in turn support and enhance our economy."

"Darlington jobs fair is unique in our town, in that it allows people the opportunity to chat to potential employers at the same time as seeking any support they may need to assist them whilst they look to secure a new job. I hope people come along and make the most of such a brilliant opportunity."

Please register your interest for Darlington Jobs Fair on Wednesday 11th February 2026. Tickets available from Eventbrite. People registered to attend will be sent an event reminder nearer the time.

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Pop-Up Café

Glow Church UK is hosting a Wellbeing Wednesday Pop-Up Café, offering a relaxed and welcoming space for people in the local community to connect, rest and enjoy some simple hospitality.

Taking place every Wednesday during term time, the pop-up café is open to anyone who would like to drop in for a cuppa, a chat, or a quiet moment. There is no cost and no pressure to take part in anything beyond enjoying the space.

As part of Wellbeing Wednesday, a gentle chair exercise class runs from 11.15am - 12 noon, followed by the pop-up café from 12.15pm - 2.00pm. Both are open to the community, and people are welcome to attend either or both.

The café is part of Glow Church UK's wider commitment to wellbeing, community connection and reducing isolation. Volunteers are on hand to offer a friendly welcome and the atmosphere is intentionally calm and informal.

Pastor John Greenow said: "Life can be busy and demanding. Wellbeing Wednesday is about creating a simple, safe space where people can slow down, feel welcome and connect with others."

For more information, visit: www.glowchurch.co.uk or simply come along.

Busy Bees Donate £500



Dear Sir,

Last week the team at Shildon Alive received a generous cheque from the Busy Bees, based in Shildon, County Durham. The Busy Bees have an exceptional track record of fundraising for causes close to the hearts of its members. They have fund-raised tirelessly for local charities and hospices in the past. The Busy Bees love what they do and enjoy meeting new people on their fundraising journey.

We met them at their weekly meeting at the Corner Cafe in Shildon to thank them for their generous donation of £500 which we will be using to support families in crisis.

Thanks to Thelma and the team for all you do for our community.

THE LAKESIDE
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VALENTINE'S DAY MENU
£24.95 PER PERSON

STARTERS

PAN FRIED SCALLOPS with Pancetta & Pea Puree

CHORIZO & PARMESAN ARANCINI with Tomato & Basil Sauce and Micro leaves

BUTTERNUT SQUASH VELOUTÉ with Chive Oil & Sour Dough

MAINS

PAN FRIED RIB EYE STEAK Boulangere Potatoes, Charred Asparagus & Peppercorn Sauce

OVEN ROASTED DUCK BREAST (SERVED PINK) Parmentier Potatoes, Stir Fried Vegetables with Sweet & Sour Sauce

SEABASS FILLET with Crushed New Potatoes, Minted Peas & Brown Shrimp Butter

DESSERTS

APPLE TARTE TATIN with Caramel Sauce & Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

WARM CHOCOLATE FUDGE BROWNIE Raspberry Compote with Thunder & Lightning Ice Cream

SHARING FONDUE BOARD Brownie, Marshmallows, Strawberries & Banana with a Baileys Chocolate Dipping Sauce

Shildon Golf and Country Club

Indian 3 Course Menu

Thurs 5th Feb
Available 5pm - 8:30pm
£21 Per Person

Starter

Onion Bhaji with Mint Yoghurt
Poppadoms served with Pickles & Chutney
Spiced Lamb Kofta with Salad & Onion Salsa

Main

Spinach & Cauliflower Aloo Gobi
Chicken Korma or Chicken Tikka Madras
Pilau Rice
Naan Bread
Bombay Potatoes

Dessert

Coconut & Mango Panna Cotta with Shortbread Biscuit
Sorbet & Berries



Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen has welcomed the launch of a new national Road Safety Strategy setting out unprecedented action to save lives on the UK's roads - but challenged the Government to do even more.

The blueprint, unveiled recently, is built around an ambition to reduce deaths and serious injuries on Britain's roads by 65% by 2035 - and 70% for children under 16 - through a series of new safety measures that have long been championed by the County Durham and Darlington PCC and have helped to shape the new national approach.

The ardent road safety campaigner, who is Joint National Lead for Roads Policing on behalf of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), has lobbied tirelessly alongside bereaved families and campaigners to prevent more unnecessary deaths and injuries on the roads, securing wide cross-sector support through her efforts.

Her work has included robust support for the 'Life is Precious' campaign raising awareness of the fatal four driving offences (speeding, mobile phone use, no seatbelts and drink or drug driving). The PCC has previously set out a series of commitments in her Police, Crime and Justice Plan to secure practical and evidence-based changes that will save lives and increase public confidence on the roads and has campaigned nationally for other reforms to eliminate risk.

These include:

- Lowering the drink-drive limit to align with Scotland and Europe.
- Immediate licence suspension for those arrested and charged with drink and drug driving offences until they attend court.
- Stronger drug-driving enforcement, especially for cannabis and cocaine, and a faster forensic turnaround of testing – with full cost recovery.
- Mandatory National Driver Offender Retraining (NDOR) to re educate and retrain drink/drug drivers and other dangerous motorists.
- Fit-to-drive reforms, including mandatory eye tests for those who have prescription lenses linked to insurance and licence renewal.
- Local reinvestment of motoring fines and offender costs into road safety.
- Maximising new technological opportunities to prevent harm to all road users and the development of advanced analytical capability to support policing the roads.

She has also provided full backing to families from Forget-me-not Families Uniting (FFU) who are campaigning for urgent measures including Progressive Driving Licences (GDL) for newly qualified drivers to slash the high number of young driver deaths in the UK. They include Karen and John Rowlands, from Durham, whose son Andrew was a passenger in a car that had been bought by a friend for £100 and was illegal and unroadworthy when it crashed in June 2020, claiming his life.

In launching the Road Safety Strategy, the Government has announced new consultations covering the introduction of a three or six-month minimum learning period to give learner drivers more time to develop their skills, the lowering of the drink drive limit in England and Wales which has remained unchanged since 1967, and mandatory eyesight testing for those over 70.

It has also pledged to explore the use of preventative technology, such as alcohol interlock devices, as a condition for being allowed to drive again following prosecution, new powers to suspend driving licences for those suspected of drink or drug driving offences and the launch of a new Road Safety Investigation Branch to analyse collision patterns, drawing on police and healthcare data to inform prevention strategies.

Funding Opportunity

Not-for-profit organisations and groups are invited to apply for funding to support community-led initiatives that meet local needs and bring improvements to welfare support. Each Local Network area within the county has received £10,000 to support projects and organisations that improve the wellbeing of residents affected by welfare reforms in their area. It forms part of a series of initiatives in place as part of the council's Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.

All applicants to the Durham County Council Local Network Welfare Fund must demonstrate that their project provides tangible, positive results and assists residents in adapting to changes to the welfare and benefit system. The funding can be used for projects and activities that educate residents about welfare reform, while providing social, emotional and mental support to those who are impacted by them.

It's expected that projects will receive a minimum grant of £5,000 with a maximum of £10,000 so they can have a significant impact on local welfare reform issues.

The closing date for applications is 12pm on Monday 2nd February 2026. For an online application pack contact the Local Network Team via email on localnetworks@durham.gov.uk

Any not-for-profit organisations or groups that have a project idea and would like to discuss it before applying, are encouraged to contact the Local Network Team via email.

S.A.C.A. School Aycliffe Community Association

Community Hall located at the bottom of Eastfields, School Aycliffe (please follow the brown/white information signs).

January

Indoor Table Top Sale - Sunday 25th January 10.00am - 2.00pm, free entry. This event and is now sold out to stall holders. Light refreshments are available (cash only).

Varied and various local stall holders.

Coffee, Cake & Stuff will be held on Thursday 29th January, 11.00am - 2.00pm. Please come and join us at our ever-popular monthly Coffee, Cake & Stuff where we will be selling our gorgeous homemade sweet and savoury bakes, and the opportunity to catch up WITH friends and neighbours.

Please contact Elizabeth on 07813 523050 or Christine on 07981 992686 for details.

February

Community Choir held fortnightly 7.00pm to 8.30pm, £3 per session including refreshments - please contact Julie on 07742 015609. Our next session is Monday 26th January - we look forward to seeing you there.

EatWise: Eat Healthier - Lose Weight

New Eatwise sessions are starting on Monday 2nd February 2026 from 6.00pm-7.00pm at Pioneering Care Partnership, Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF.

Come and join us for twelve weeks free support to help you adopt lifestyle and behaviour changes for a healthier you. Book your place by calling Jules Howe on 07809 342192.



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Need Evidence

Dear Sir,
I would like to comment on a recent leaflet received from Fornax Environmental Solutions Ltd regarding the proposed hazardous waste incinerator on Heighington Lane.

The leaflet claims that annual emissions of "NOx gas, including dioxins and furans, released each year will be the same as from a single diesel HGV doing 20,000 miles a year." However, this claim does not appear to align with Fornax's own modelling submitted with its permit application.

An external analysis-based on Fornax's Air Dispersion Modelling, shows permitted emissions could be comparable to roughly 490 diesel trucks, not one. This indicates the leaflet appears to significantly underestimate emissions, even before considering dioxins and furans, which are associated with serious health impacts, including cancer.

The leaflet also states "There will be no odour, noise or dust produced." However, Fornax's own odour and noise assessments, submitted to the Environment Agency, acknowledge that odour and noise may occur. Again, these claims do not appear to be supported by the company's own permit application.

As parents with children attending schools near the proposed site, we expect evidence based information. Where public statements appear to conflict with submitted assessments, these discrepancies must be clearly explained. Name and address supplied.

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Murder Mystery Evening

You are warmly invited to an entertaining Murder Mystery Evening at Heighington Village Hall on Saturday 28th February from 7.30pm to 10.00pm.

Step into a world of intrigue, suspense and clever detective work with our mystery, 'Death Comes to Downton'. Enjoy an immersive evening as the plot unfolds, clues are revealed and you work together to uncover the culprit.

Your ticket includes a delicious three-course meal, making it a perfect night out with friends or neighbours. There will also be a raffle, with prize donations very welcome, helping to add to the fun and fundraising.

Please note this is a bring your own drinks and glasses event.

Tickets: £17.50 per person;

Available from Gill on 07767 279763;

All profits go to St. Michael's Church.

Come along for an evening of mystery, laughter, good food and community spirit - we look forward to seeing you there!

N.A.F.C. REPORT



Aycliffe recorded two draws in their first two games of 2026, with both games featuring last minute equalisers. Aycliffe's next three games are all on the road, with a second visit to Ossett this season on the 24th, a long midweek trip to Matlock on the 27th and a short trip to Redcar on the 31st, to end the month. The next home game is against Silsden on Saturday 7th February, followed by the visit of Pontefract Collieries on Tuesday 10th February.

Tuesday 13th January - North Ferriby 1 v Newton Aycliffe 1

Newton Aycliffe went 1-0 down at the start of the second half, but spent an overwhelming majority of the contest with a higher degree of possession after Luke Hogg's goal for the home side. Ferriby couldn't get the ball off Aycliffe for large parts of the contest and the persistence of the team was rewarded when Kieran Greenway made it 1-1 in the 90th minute.

Saturday 17th January - Newton Aycliffe 1 v Consett AFC 1

A tough home game for Aycliffe saw them once again have a large amount of possession, but not gain three points, on a day where everyone below at least picked up one. Despite early penalty appeals by Consett the score was 0-0 for most of the first half until Jack Robertson was assisted by Tom Henson and Robertson wasted no time in slotting the ball past Consett's Harry Moss. Late in the second half, substitute Ben Ramsey forced a great and confident save from Kyle Seymour. But, eventually, fellow substitute Eddie Thomas equalised in the 90th minute.

Report by Ryan Livingston. Photo by Yvonne Wood of Jack Robertson celebrating his goal against Consett.

Tesco Donation



Newton Aycliffe's Air Cadet Squadron was the beneficiary of the Tesco book stall for the month leading up to Christmas. Last week, we had the pleasure of receiving £510 from Shirley, our Community Champion, on behalf of Tesco. It is donations like these that truly keep our squadron running.

We would like you to say thank you for this money, and that it will go towards our cadets training and studies through classifications and other skills.

The squadron currently has capacity to take more cadets and will be holding a recruitment evening on 26th March for anyone interested in joining the squadron. Cadets can join from age 13 or age 12 if they are currently in year 8 at school. To see what 1407 cadets get up to, check out the Facebook page of the air cadet website: <https://www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets>

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Point North - Thriving Together

Helping to create thriving communities across County Durham

A new funding programme has launched to support community groups and organisations across County Durham.

Durham County Council is launching the Thriving Together programme through its partners, Point North, to offer funding to the county's voluntary and community sector for the delivery of essential support to residents. The council has an annual fund of £500,000 that it is making available to organisations via Point North, to help improve the health and wellbeing of residents and boost community resilience.

Cllr Howard Brown, Cabinet member for adult and health services, said: "We are delighted to be launching the Thriving Together fund through Point North, allowing organisations in the voluntary and community sector to access longer-term funding that will support communities across County Durham. We know that many residents are finding things tough right now, and it's affecting both their mental and physical health. In our recent Wellbeing Survey, only half of adults living in the most disadvantaged areas of County Durham said they had good mental health. This programme is designed to change that by bringing people together and offering targeted support to build stronger, more resilient communities. Local grassroots groups are key to this support. They often connect with people who might not feel comfortable using other services. This fund will help these groups offer a wider range of

activities and reach more residents across the county, without them having to reapply for financial help each year."

The programme also aims to enhance residents' awareness of the tools and support available to live well, reduce feelings of anxiety and prevent suicide.

The fund will also support the voluntary and community sector to connect people through the expansion of the council's Welcome Spaces programme and by providing opportunities to help improve resident wellbeing through activities such as gardening, drawing, reading and learning new skills.

Organisations will be encouraged to work with their local communities to decide what activities are needed in their area, with funding also made available to provide essential training and skills development to staff and volunteers.

Michelle Cooper, chief executive at Point North, said: "Communities across the county are facing a number of challenges so we are pleased to be able to provide support through the delivery of this programme.

"By working together with voluntary and community sector organisations, we can help strengthen our communities and offer residents a wide range of help, support, and opportunities so they are not alone when facing difficult life challenges."

Groups and organisations can apply for funding by visiting Point North at: www.pointnorth.org.uk/grants/thriving-together-large-grants-2

Aycliffe Youth Football News



U7 Eagles v Marton Royals (Cup)

On a wet day and heavy pitch, the Eagles started slow, but soon got up and running with a solo goal from Chester who soon added a second before half time. Second half the lads pushed on, resulting in Hunter getting the Eagles 3rd, however, Marton pulled one back. The lads reacted scoring four more goals, Chester and Hunter with hattricks and one from Harrison, FT 7-1 and into the next round of the cup.

U14 Eagles 10 v Grangetown 0

Great return to playing, after a long layoff, The Eagles bossed the 1st half going to half time 2-0 up with goals from Conor and Harry. Second half saw the Eagles dominate with Tarek and Connor completing hat tricks and Sam, Harry and Richie adding to their tallies .

U10 Pumas v Darlington Locos

First game back for the girls, after a long winter break, but they played some good stuff. Unfortunately, the opposition were a strong side.

U17 Eagles 1 v Durham Tigers 1

First match since November and the lads were a little rusty, but gave it their all throughout the whole game. Durham made it difficult and were passing the ball well, meaning Aycliffe having to work extremely hard. End to end and the points shared. Goal from Olly. MOM Joe.

U11 Eagles v Darlington TSC

The game was a chance to assess the teams progress having lost 4-0 away earlier in the season. The boys really stepped up and despite going down 1-3 in the end, the score does not reflect the game. The Eagles hit the bar, had plenty of chances and would have more than deserved a draw and maybe more from the game. Superb effort from the whole team.

U16 Angels 0 v Darlington FC 3

A tight game at the Oakleaf saw Darlington score the only goal of the first half on 26 minutes. Aycliffe came close to grabbing an equaliser in the second half, but as they changed shape and pushed forward in the last 10 minutes, Darlington scored two to flatter the scoreline. Star players were the excellent centre backs Isobel & Daisy D.

U15 Girls 2 v Deerness Valley 5

The first half looked very promising with Aycliffe getting the first goal on 22 minutes and enjoying a majority of the possession, HT 1-1. On the hour mark Aycliffe's match fitness dropped off and with only one sub available their options were limited. They started losing yards to Deerness all over the pitch and the game got away from them.

Goals: Peyton H, Layla B. Assists: Payton T x2. POTM: Imogen C.

U12 Falcons 1 v Darlington All Stars 1

The visitors are top of the league and unbeaten this season. The Falcons were the better team in the first half, going into HT 1-0 up with a goal from Leo, assisted by Evan. They had to defend with their lives in the second half, Harry M making some great saves to keep them out. 100% effort from the whole team. POM opposition: Hunter. Coaches: Harry M.

U11 Wildcats v Wearside FC

After a long Christmas break it was great to get the girls back on the pitch. What a game, with only nine available players, all the girls were asked was to give 100% and don't give up. They gave that and so much more. Everyone on the field battled hard and never stopped.

U8 Wildcats v Darlington Locos

The first match in five weeks, but the girls showed no signs of rustiness. Aycliffe passed the ball better, had more possession and had more shots. However, they conceded two unfortunate goals at the end of each half and couldn't get a goal of their own to give them the impetus to kick on and take hold of the result. POTM Emily.

Wildcats Girls Development and Little Eagles Boys Development

We now have spaces available for Year 1 boys and girls at our development academies, If you are interested and need more info; contact Berni 07939 045242.



Email: alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk

It has been an important week for our area, as the government made major announcements on transport that will have a real impact locally. The reopening of the Leamside Line has taken a significant step forward, with the Labour Government committing funding to the project. Reopening the line will bring major benefits to our area, particularly for residents and local businesses. Communities such as Ferryhill and Bowburn will see new stations and surrounding areas will benefit from the jobs, opportunities, growth and regeneration that will follow.

I want to pay tribute to everyone who has campaigned so hard for this project over many years, particularly Sharon Hodgson MP for Washington and Gateshead South, who has worked tirelessly for more than 20 years to make this happen. I look forward to working closely with the government and our Regional Mayor, Kim McGuiness, to ensure the line is delivered in full.

On the wider theme of transport, the government has also announced a new road safety strategy. These proposals have been developed with the support of road safety campaigners from across the country and I am proud that local campaigner, Shalorna Warner, has played a role in shaping them. The proposals include reducing the alcohol limit, which is currently the highest in Europe, introducing a minimum learning period for all new drivers and bringing in mandatory eye tests for people over 70. I would encourage residents to take part in the public consultation

and share their views on how we can make our local roads safer. You can have your say here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-strategy>

I am also supporting efforts to expand the space and satellite industry in our region. We are already a key contributor to this growing sector, with companies working with major space agencies around the world. I recently met with UK Space to discuss how we can build on the strong cluster of businesses already operating in Sedgefield and Newton Aycliffe. We talked about how to attract further investment, create skilled jobs and position the constituency as a leading player in the UK's rapidly expanding space sector and I look forward to continuing this work.

I also had the privilege of visiting HMS Raleigh, as part of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, which gave me the opportunity to see Royal Navy training up close. I met trainees preparing for life at sea and learned more about the demanding programme that shapes new recruits.

The Passing Out Parade was a real highlight, and I felt immense pride in the young men and women beginning their naval careers. It was a powerful reminder of the dedication, discipline and teamwork that underpin the Royal Navy's work.

Finally, I have launched my online newsletter. If you would like to stay up to date with local issues, community events and national developments, you can sign up at: <https://alanstricklandmp.eo.page/h2n1w>

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7	1	4	6					

1900+ Incidents Attended in 2025

The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) has revealed that their critical care team responded to more than 1,900 incidents in 2025.

The charity currently provides air ambulance services across the North of England and the Isle of Man, mainly in hours of daylight, while on a night-time, from 8pm to 8am, the team transfer to a rapid response vehicle.

In total, the charity's critical care teams, which are based in Eaglescliffe in the North East, and Penrith in Cumbria, responded to 1,938 incidents across the region.

This included 1,218 in the North East, 542 in Cumbria, 94 in Northumberland, 33 in Scotland, 25 in North Yorkshire, 14 in the Isle of Man and 12 in Lancashire.

The most common incidents they responded to were cardiac arrests, road traffic collisions, medical incidents, falls and assaults.

As a charity, GNAAS does not receive government funding, and in November they launched an appeal called Operation SOS: Secure Our Service to help fund a new fleet of helicopters.

Their current aircraft, which are Dauphin N3 and Dauphin N3+ helicopters, have responded to thousands of life-saving missions, but due to parts shortages, ever-rising maintenance costs, and extended downtime, it has become increasingly challenging to operate them.

As demand for their service continues to grow, the charity has designed the blueprints for a stronger future, investing in three state-of-the-art helicopters called Airbus H145 D2.

Joe Garcia MBE, chief executive officer at GNAAS, said: "Returning to a three-helicopter fleet means that when one aircraft is undergoing essential maintenance, two more are ready to answer the call. It's the difference between a patient being reached in their moment of need, or not, and could be the difference between life and death."

By changing the helicopters they operate, the charity can cut costs while maintaining a more reliable fleet that will secure their service for the next decade and beyond.

The major obstacle the charity faces is that they need to raise £2.5 million for the deposit for the third aircraft and so far they have raised 15% of the required funds.

Mr Garcia added: "The public's support is the foundation of our service. They have fuelled our missions and equipped our crews. We would not turn to them with such a significant request unless it was absolutely critical. This isn't for our day-to-day running costs; this is a landmark investment in the future of emergency care for our entire community, and we face a rapidly closing window to make this happen."

"By donating to our appeal, they will be helping us purchase the helicopter that ensures we can reach the next child, parent, or loved one who needs us. It will turn our blueprint into a reality and secure the future of our service."

To find out more about Operation SOS and support the appeal visit: gna.as/secure_our_service

In Memoriam

In Loving Memory of
Audrey Wallis

The flower we place upon your grave may wither and decay. But our love for you dear Audrey, will never fade away. From your loving family.

Thomas Sproates

1930-2026
Of Newton Aycliffe. Passed away peacefully following a stay in hospital on Saturday 17th January after 95 years of love, laughter and happiness.

Much loved husband of the late Olive, Dad, Grandad and Great Grandad. Our hearts are broken, but Tom & Olive are now reunited.

Family and friends are invited to meet at Wear Valley Crematorium on Friday 13th February at 1.30pm followed by a funeral tea at Woodham Golf Club. At Tom's request, family flowers only and his preference is no dark colours need to be worn.

Donations will be gratefully received for the Great North Air Ambulance Service. There will be a donation box at the Crematorium and at the Golf Club.

Janet Metcalfe (nee Walker)

Of Aycliffe Village, formerly of Ricknall Grange East Farm, Aycliffe and also Maidenhead, Berkshire, passed away peacefully in hospital on 21st December 2025, aged 70 years.

Much loved by family and friends. Funeral to take place at St. Andrew's Church, Aycliffe Village on Friday 6th February at 2.15pm followed by Committal at St. Andrew's Church yard.

No flowers please, apart from a button hole or buy flowers for home, donations to St Andrew's Church.

Obituary

Thomas Garlick 'Tot'

Passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Wednesday 7th January. A service will take place on Wednesday 4th February, 11.30am at Wear Valley Crematorium. Everyone is welcome afterwards to Woodham Golf Club. Please wear casual clothing.

Freida Tinkler (Pinkney)

Passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family on 3rd January, aged 94. Will family and friends please meet for a service at St. Clare's Church on Friday 6th February at 11.45am followed by Committal at Wear Valley Crematorium, Coundon. Donations, in lieu of flowers, to the Dementia Trust or Alzheimer's Trust.

Congratulations

Alex Newey

Double digits at last! Happy 10th birthday to our awesome Alex. Love, Mam, Dad and Skye xxx

Beverley

27th January Happy birthday to my wonderful Wife, my soul mate, and the one who keeps me grounded every single day. 3-8-1. Love you always. Paul xxx

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Eliminating Polio

Polio - poliomyelitis - affects mainly children under the age of five, and is spread virally, through contaminated food and water. Polio is asymptomatic, so those newly infected show few, if any, signs of the disease. For some, however, polio can cause terrible life-changing conditions, such as paralysis and deformity of the limbs. Although once common, vaccination programmes have eradicated polio in Britain, and it now exists in a few pockets of the world, blighting the lives of those it touches.

Students of Woodham Academy's Eco group, in conjunction with Rotary Great Aycliffe, have recently planted a patch of purple crocus on the school site to symbolise the terrible legacy of polio, and as a visual statement that they actively support the ongoing efforts of the world's scientific and caring communities to eradicate this disease once and for all, and wipe it completely from the earth. The early flowering, purple crocus has been chosen in recognition of a purple mark given to vaccinated children to show they have been immunised against the virus.

A sign will be placed alongside this garden of remembrance, so family and visitors to Woodham Academy will understand its significance, and the Eco group intends to plant other, purple, native wild flowers beneath the borders of its trees, and create baskets of purple blooms to promote this worthy cause throughout the rest of the year.

**Santa Tours . . .
We Need Your Help**

The Town Council is keen to undertake a review of the much-loved Santa Tours event, following the changes to the event last year, to look in more detail at what went well, what did not, and to look at options for improving this year's event and making it as magical and accessible as possible.

We need your help to do this and are looking for volunteers and members of the public to serve on a new Santa Tours Sub Committee. Your feedback and ideas will be crucial to shaping the future of this iconic event, so please consider putting your name forward.

If you wish to join this sub-committee and help shape the future of the Santa Tours event, please log your interest with the Council by ringing 01325 300700 or emailing: info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

In the meantime, an initial review of the event is to be undertaken by the Council's Service Review Sub-Committee. This meeting will take place on Wednesday 4th February at 7pm at the Council Offices.

The Council is very keen to hear the views of the public as part of this review and members of the public are encouraged to attend this meeting, at which there will be an opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

Why did the Santa Tours need to change last year?

The Town Council needed to make some changes to the Santa Tours last year to make the event safer, more reliable, and more accessible to everyone who wishes to see and greet Santa on Christmas Eve.

These changes were made to address concerns relating to the safety of volunteers and the public, increasing operational difficulties linked to the growing town, increasing numbers of parked cars, narrow streets, and difficulties securing enough volunteers and suitable vehicles.

The changes saw the event move to a revised 'hybrid' system of designated locations around the town, at set times, allowing families to choose the place and time that suits them best, giving children plenty of time to chat and have their photo taken with Santa.

This was supplemented by a limited tour of the streets that also took place with Santa inside the vehicle and not stopping, but waving as he passed.

A lot of work went into planning the changes and implementing the new hybrid system of fixed locations and a limited tour of the streets and the Council was delighted to receive a lot of assistance and support from many community organisations, public houses and churches who offered up their car parks and provided hospitality and assistance on the night.

Santa also visited all care homes on Christmas Eve morning.

In addition, the Council worked with local charity All Disabilities Matter to host a Santa's Grotto in the town centre in the days on Christmas Eve.

These updates were made to ensure that everyone could continue to enjoy the magic of this much-loved event, while keeping our volunteers and residents safe, and reducing the risk of anyone missing out on seeing Santa.

However, the Council appreciates and understands that the changes to the event last year created some concern in the community, with a number of members of the public unhappy at the changes, some of whom attended Council Meetings to formally express their concerns. This is why we are keen to listen to public and volunteer feedback and involve the community in shaping the future of the event.

Ultimately, the Council needs to decide whether it wishes to pursue alternative options for running the event more in keeping with in the traditional tour format, bearing in mind the difficulties and costs involved in satisfactorily mitigating the safety risks, or whether to focus on improving and adapting the fixed meeting point format whilst all the time trying to ensure the event is as accessible and magical as possible.

A Huge Thank You to the Volunteers!

The Council wishes to say a huge thank you to all volunteers who made Santa's visits possible last year.

Your dedication helped to bring joy to hundreds of families!

Massive thanks also to all of the community organisations, public houses and churches who offered their car parks, buildings, and hospitality on the night and helped to make the fixed locations so welcoming.

The County Council of Durham
(Watson Road, Newton Aycliffe)
(Temporary Road Closure)
Order 2026

The Council on 9/1/2026 made the above Order under Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, to prohibit all vehicular traffic from proceeding on the following lengths of road a 275 metre length of Watson Road between its junctions with Cumby Road, Newton Aycliffe to enable telecom duct and cable installation works to be undertaken. An alternative route will be available to vehicular traffic via Cumby Road. The maximum duration of the Order is 18 months.

The works commenced on 5/1/2026 under an emergency 5 day TTRN notice. A further extension to the works is now required which are anticipated to be completed in 7 days. On occasions, alternative dates for the closure may be necessary and these will be signed on site accordingly.

DATED: 23/1/2026



Helen Bradley
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See What Aycliffe's Reserve Unit has to Offer

The Army Reserve plays a crucial role in supporting the British Army, giving people the chance to experience military life on a flexible, part time basis. Within this structure, the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) form one of the Army's most skilled technical corps, responsible for maintaining and repairing the Army's wide range of equipment. Beyond REME, the Army Reserve offers a wide variety of diverse roles from logistics and medical support to communications, engineering, specialist trades and more, ensuring there is a path for people of all backgrounds and skill sets. Reservists in REME benefit from high quality technical and leadership training, gain nationally recognised qualifications and develop valuable skills that transfer directly into civilian life, all while contributing to vital engineering support, both in the UK and overseas.

Residents from Newcastle, County Durham, Teesside and the surrounding areas are being encouraged to explore a new challenge that can fit around their current job or studies. On 27th January, 124 Company of 102 REME will host an Open Evening at DL5 6UR, starting at 7.30pm, giving visitors the chance to meet serving soldiers and learn more about life in the Army Reserve. The event aims to provide a relaxed, informative insight into what it means to serve part time alongside existing commitments. LCpl Leonard said: "Joining the Reserve has given me the best of both worlds. I can keep my full-time career, but I also get to train, learn new skills and be part of a team that makes a real difference. It's more rewarding than I ever expected, and the opportunities, whether technical, personal or adventurous, are massive." During the evening, soldiers will outline their weekly training routine, which includes Tuesday night parades and selected weekend activities at Newton Aycliffe and Walker. Attendees will hear how reservists are paid to train while maintaining their civilian careers, as well as the opportunities to take part in sport, fitness sessions and adventurous activities. With the added potential to travel the world, the event offers an ideal chance to ask questions, explore the facilities and discover what a role within 124 Company could offer.



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